to the Ministries/Departments concerned and progress will be monitored *vis-a-vis* these and reviewed as indicated above.

Criteria for defining 'minority community'

*286. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved any definition of the term minority community;

(b) if not, whether Government propose to do the same; and

(c) the details of present criteria Government have adopted for the purpose of implementation of various schemes or otherwise?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI. A.R. ANTULAY): (a) and (b) Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, pertaining to 'Definitions' states: 'minority' for the purpose of this Act means a community notified as such by the Central Government".

(c) For purposes of implementation of various schemes for the welfare of minorities, the criterion adopted is the notification dated 23rd October, 1993, which notified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities.

Team for research in arctic circle

*287. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sent recently a team to the Arctic circle for research purposes;

(b) if so, researches they are supposed to do;

(c) how many such delegations have been sent to the Arctic circle earlier during the last five years;

(d) whether Government would make a claim to the resources of the Arctic circle; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The first expedition to Arctic region was launched on 3rd August, 2007 from New Delhi. A team of five (5) Indian Scientists has gone to the international research facility at Ny-Alesund at Spitsbergen Island in Svalbard Archipelago of Norway. The scientists belonging to National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR), Goa; Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad; Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune; and Lucknow University, have initiated research in the fields of atmospheric sciences, microbiology, geology

and glaciology. The major areas of research in the Arctic pertain to climate change and paleoclimate; glaciology and geology; marine biology and microbiology.

Such matters are governed by an International Treaty - the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which does not allow claims beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and all signatory nations including India are bound by this Convention.

Requirement of power plant equipments

*288. SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the BHEL is unable to cater to the requirement of equipments critical for the projected expansion of power sector;

(b) if so, how Government propose to overcome the constraints;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Ministry proposes to set up a separate company for the manufacture and supply of such equipments;

(d) whether Government have assessed that the expansion of the BHEL would be a cost-effective measure, as compared to the setting up of a new company; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SHINDE): (a) and (b) Delay in supply of critical equipment has been one of the reasons for slippages in executing the power projects in the recent past. The working of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), which is the major manufacturer of plant and equipment in the public sector, is being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises; furthermore, BHEL is augmenting its capacity to 10,000 MW by December, 2007 and further to 15,000 MW by December, 2009.

This Ministry is also supportive of the development and diversification of power generation equipment in the country with the objective of increasing competition, manufacturing capacity, improvement in supply schedules and quality; In addition, International Competitive Bidding (ICB) route is available to the PSUs for supply, erection and commissioning of power projects' equipment.

(c) to (e) This Ministry is of the view that there is need for substantial step up of world-class competitive manufacturing capability in the country considering the unprecedented capacity addition programme in the next 20-25 years. Therefore, more players need to be encouraged in the field of power equipment manufacturing to augment capacity as well as to generate competition.

NTPC, a Navaratna company under this Ministry, has decided to take 44.6% stake of Government of Kerala in Transformers and Electricals Kerala, Ltd. (TELK). An agreement to this effect has been signed amongst NTPC, TELK and Government of Kerala on 23.06.2007. TELK is a State-owned Company in the business of manufacturing of Transformers.